

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG HOPE, PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, AND LOCUS OF CONTROL¹

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Summary.—29 male and 79 female undergraduate and graduate students took the 1986 Miller Hope Scale, Beck's 1988 Hopelessness Scale, Erikson's Psychosocial Stage Inventory, Levenson's 1972 Locus of Control Scale and rated their present state of hopefulness on a 10-point scale. As expected, scores on both the Miller Hope Scale and the self-rated hope scale were negatively correlated with scores on Beck's Hopelessness Scale, but positively with scores on Erikson's Psychosocial Stage Inventory. Thus, greater hopelessness was associated with more successful resolution of psychosocial issues. The Miller Hope Scale was negatively and Beck's Hopelessness Scale was positively associated on the Locus of Control Scale with viewing control as from powerful others or chance. Therefore, lack of hopefulness was related with the perception that external factors control one's life. The Miller Hope Scale and scores on self-rated hopefulness were not significantly correlated. The concept of hope is more complex than currently measured by any single scale and requires further refinement.

Hope has been defined as "a state of being, characterized by an anticipation of a continued good state, an improved state, or a release from a perceived entrapment" (Miller & Powers, 1988, p. 6). This definition is consistent with the definition of Staats and Stassen (1986) and Staats (1987) who described hope as "a future-referenced, affective cognition based on wished-for events and some expectation of the occurrence of these events" (p. 2). This study investigated whether a stronger sense of hope is associated with greater psychological maturity and a sense of control over the events of one's life in a normal population of young adults.

The first aim was to explore hope developmentally. We hypothesized a positive correlation between hope and the resolution of Erikson's first six psychosocial stages. Secondly, we hypothesized that hope would be positively associated with a sense of personal control and negatively with feeling controlled by external or chance factors. Thirdly, we explored the relationship between hope and hopelessness. We expected a strong negative association even in a normal population where hopelessness (Beck & Steer, 1988) has not often been measured. Lastly, we studied the correlation between an objective measure of hope, Miller's Hope Scale (1986), and a subjective rating of currently experienced hopefulness which we ourselves created.

METHOD

The sample consisted of 108 students (29 men and 79 women; mean

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age 28.5 yr., $SD = 10.8$) who were enrolled in both graduate and undergraduate courses at a large midwestern 4-yr. university. The sample was primarily Caucasian with only 2 men and 2 women self-identified as minority members. Each person voluntarily and anonymously completed a 35-min. questionnaire during a class period.

The questionnaire contained five measures: (1) an objective measure of hope, the Miller Hope Scale (1986), (2) the first six stages of Erikson's Psychosocial Stage Inventory (Rosenthal, Gurney, & Moore, 1981), (3) Levenson's (1972) three-dimensional Locus of Control Scale (Internal, Powerful Others, and Chance), (4) Beck's Hopelessness Scale (Beck & Steer, 1988), and (5) a self-rating of currently experienced hopefulness using a 10-point scale ranging from "No hope" to "Filled with hope." The participants also provided information on their age, sex, race, education, and marital status.

RESULTS

There were no significant sex differences ($p < .05$) on any of the five measures; see Table 1.

TABLE 1
MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND CORRELATIONS ($N = 108$)

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Miller	Self-rating	Beck	Locus of Control		
						I	PO	C
Miller Hope	147.8	33.0						
Self-rated Hope	6.5	2.3	.15					
Beck Hopelessness	2.8	3.5	-.25 ^b	-.57 ^c				
Erikson's Stages								
Basic Trust	33.1	6.6	.31 ^b	.34 ^c	-.46 ^c	.38 ^c	-.38 ^c	-.45 ^c
Autonomy	36.6	6.1	.29 ^b	.32 ^b	-.34 ^c	.46 ^c	-.43 ^c	-.40 ^c
Initiative	34.6	6.0	.26 ^b	.31 ^b	-.31 ^b	.41 ^c	-.45 ^c	-.38 ^c
Industry	37.3	5.9	.30 ^b	.30 ^b	-.34 ^c	.31 ^b	-.32 ^b	-.35 ^c
Identity	36.4	6.3	.42 ^c	.36 ^c	-.42 ^c	.38 ^c	-.45 ^c	-.49 ^c
Intimacy	34.7	6.8	.42 ^c	.25 ^a	-.18	.21 ^a	-.40 ^c	-.22 ^a
Locus of Control								
Internal (I)	29.6	4.9	.11	.12	-.16			
Powerful Others (PO)	14.0	6.5	-.36 ^c	-.18	.20 ^a		-.25 ^b	
Chance (C)	13.0	6.8	-.29 ^b	-.15	.20 ^a		-.27 ^b	.60 ^c

^a $p < .05$. ^b $p < .01$. ^c $p < .001$.

As postulated, both the Miller Hope Scale and the self-report were positively correlated with scores on the six psychosocial development scales. Beck's measure of hopelessness was negatively correlated except for the intimacy scores. But, contrary to expectation, scores from neither hope index nor the hopelessness measure were correlated with internal locus of control. Scores on the Miller Hope Scale were negatively and scores on hopelessness were positively correlated with perceiving Powerful Others or Chance in control of one's life.

As hypothesized, scores obtained on Beck's Hopelessness Scale were negatively correlated with both measures of hope. The Miller Hope Scale and the self-rating of hope were not correlated. Furthermore, none of Miller's (1986) 10 factors which comprise "the domain of hope"—mutuality, sense of the possible, anticipation, firm beliefs, purpose or meaning, well-being and self-esteem, freedom, past life, motivation, and hopelessness—were significantly correlated with the self-report measure.

DISCUSSION

As hypothesized, achieving greater psychosocial maturity was associated with greater hopefulness in these young adults. Since this was a correlational study, we cannot conclude maturity was the basis. Further research is needed to discover whether hope fosters maturity or whether mature people see more choices and so have hope. Lack of personal control, that is, control by chance or by powerful others, was associated with a lessened sense of hope.

Both measures of hope were negatively associated with hopelessness; however, the two hope measures were not significantly correlated. Perhaps the two measures tap different aspects of being hopeful. The Miller Hope Scale primarily assesses cognitive aspects and the self-report score affective state. Further research efforts are needed to refine the nature of hope and to understand ways in which it can be encouraged, because ". . . hopeful people are able to come through enormous travails because they understand suffering and have learned to surmount it" (deAngelis, 1991, p. 18).

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